

3.0 Closure

Facility closure can be either temporary or permanent. Temporary closure is a halting of operations for longer than would be required for routine maintenance, overhaul, or replacement of major equipment. There are a number of potential reasons for temporary closures, such as damage to the facility resulting from events such as fire, earthquake, or other natural occurrences, or as a result of short-term economic considerations. Permanent closure is a halting of facility operations with no intent to restart. Permanent closure could result from a combination of facility age and economic considerations, from damage considered beyond repair or other reasons. Both temporary and permanent closures of the Amended Project are addressed below.

3.1 Temporary Closure

In the event of a temporary closure, security for the Amended Project facilities will be maintained on a 24-hour basis and the California Energy Commission (CEC) and other responsible agencies will be notified. Subsequent activities will depend on whether or not the temporary closure involves a release of hazardous materials.

If there is no actual or threatened release of hazardous materials, a contingency plan for temporary shutdown, which will be developed prior to the start of Amended Project operation, will be implemented. The purpose of this plan is to ensure compliance with all applicable laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards (LORS) and appropriate protection of public health, safety, and the environment during the shutdown. Depending on the expected duration of the temporary shutdown, the contingency plan may include draining and properly disposing of chemicals from storage tanks and other facility equipment, safe shutdown of all plant equipment, and various other measures to protect onsite workers, the public, and the environment.

If the temporary closure involves an actual or threatened release of hazardous materials, procedures will be implemented as provided in a Hazardous Materials Business Plan that will be developed for the Amended Project (see Section 5.6, Hazardous Materials Handling). Procedures will include, but not be limited to:

- Measures to control the release of hazardous materials;
- Requirements for notifying the appropriate agencies and the public;
- Emergency response procedures; and
- Training requirements for Project personnel in hazardous materials release response and control.

Once the hazardous materials release has been resolved, temporary closure will proceed as described above for circumstances where no hazardous materials release has occurred.

3.2 Permanent Closure

The planned operational life of the Amended Project is 30 years, but the facility conceivably could operate for a longer or shorter period depending on economic or other circumstances. For example, if the Project remains economically viable, it could operate for more than 30 years, which would defer environmental impacts associated with closure and with development of replacement electric power generating facilities. Alternatively, if the facility were to become economically non-viable before 30 years of operation, permanent closure could occur sooner. Regardless of when permanent closure occurs, a decommissioning plan will be developed and implemented that presents the appropriate closure procedures. As for a temporary closure, security for Project facilities will be maintained on a 24-hour basis during permanent closure and the CEC and other responsible agencies will be notified of the decommissioning schedule and plans.

The procedures provided in the decommissioning plan will be designed to ensure public health and safety, environmental protection, and compliance with applicable LORS. The decommissioning plan will be submitted to the CEC for review and approval before permanent closure activities begin. Depending on conditions at the time of closure, closure measures may range from extensive “mothballing” to the complete removal of Project equipment and other structures.

In general, the decommissioning plan for the Amended Project will address the following:

- Proposed decommissioning measures for the all of the facilities constructed as part of the Project, both on the plant site as well as the offsite brine injection wells and their associated pipelines;
- Activities necessary for site restoration, if removal of all equipment and appurtenances is needed;
- Provisions for recycling facility components, collection and disposal of hazardous wastes, and resale of unused chemicals to suppliers or other parties;
- Decommissioning alternatives other than full site restoration;
- Costs associated with the proposed decommissioning activities and funding sources to implement these activities; and
- Conformance with applicable LORS and with applicable local/regional plans.

Because it is not possible to predict the conditions that will exist at the time in the future when decommissioning decisions will have to be made, details of the decommissioning process and procedures will be developed and provided to the CEC when the time for permanent closure is closer and more information is available.